

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY ROME
AMCONSUL TURIN
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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: BDIS, ELAB, IT
SUBJ: WORKERS END "OCCUPATION" OF TORRINGTON PLANT

REF: (A) ROME 6598 (B) ROME 0761 (C) GENOA 0015

1. AFTER 1071 DAYS, THE WORKERS' "OCCUPATION" OF THE TORRINGTON PLANT IN GENOA HAS FINALLY ENDED. OFFICIALS OF THE COMPANY REGAINED POSSESSION OF THE PLANT IN A BRIEF CEREMONY ON MAY 31. TORRINGTON OFFICIALS HAVE BEGUN PROPERTY INVENTORY IN PREPARATION FOR REMOVAL OF ALL SPECIALIZED MACHINERY. ON DECEMBER 1, TORRINGTON WILL TURN THE PLANT OVER TO GEPI, THE ITALIAN SALVAGE AGENCY.

2. IN EXCHANGE FOR A COMMITMENT TO INVEST 12.9 BILLION LIRE (DLRS 14.8 MILLION) FOR NEW KNITTING NEEDLE PRODUCTION MACHINERY OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS, GEPI GOT TORRINGTON'S 354 EX-EMPLOYEES TO AGREE TO END THE OCCUPATION OF THE PLANT. THE NEW EQUIPMENT WILL BE BUILT IN ITALY USING THE DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY OF THE FRENCH FIRM, LEBOCEY. GEPI PLANS TO CALL THE 354 EX-TORRINGTON WORKERS BACK TO WORK IN VARIOUS STAGES UNTIL THE PLANT GOES INTO FULL PRODUCTION IN 1983. DURING THE LAYOFF, THE WORKERS WILL CONTINUE TO BE PAID THROUGH THE CASSA
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DI INTEGRAZIONE (WORKERS SUPPLEMENT FUND).

3. THE GENOA PRESS NOTES THAT THE OCCUPIERS ARE PLEASED WITH THIS SETTLEMENT. SEVERAL ARTICLES HAIL THE OCCUPIERS AS HEROES AND DECLARE THEM VICTORIOUS IN THE LONG STRUGGLE FOR JOB PRESERVATION. THE PRESS AND UNIONS FAIL TO MENTION THAT TORRINGTON EMPLOYED 550 WORKERS PRIOR TO THE OCCUPATION

AND THAT THE 200 EX-EMPLOYEES WHO FOUND ALTERNATIVE EMPLOYMENT WERE THE MOST PRODUCTIVE WORKERS.

4. COMMENT: THE OCCUPIERS' DEPARTURE FROM THE TORRINGTON PLANT IS NOT ACCOMPANIED BY ANY OF THE EMOTION THAT WAS ATTACHED TO THE INITIAL OCCUPATION BACK IN JUNE 25, 1975. DURING THE PAST THREE YEARS, THE WORKERS' ANGER AT TORRINGTON'S DECISION TO CLOSE DOWN WAS GRADUALLY TURNED AGAINST THE GOI'S SLOWNESS IN FINDING A SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM. NOW THAT GEPI IS COMMITTED TO SERVE AS THE EMPLOYER OF LAST RESORT, THE OCCUPIERS ARE WILLING TO RELEASE THEIR TORRINGTON "HOSTAGE". BARRING SOME LAST MINUTE HITCH, SUCH AS DELIBERATE DAMAGE AND/OR SABOTAGE OF THE PLANT'S EQUIPMENT WHICH TORRINGTON PLANS TO REMOVE, THE LONG CONTROVERSY APPEARS TO HAVE FINALLY COME TO AN END. DI SCIULLO

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